

Dinners

a reader with

Susanna Fasciolo

Jue Yang

Marieke de Zwart



Introduction

We are three female filmmakers. We formed this reading group because we happened to be (interested in) reading an essay by Laura Mulvey at the same time. We criticized the psychoanalytic vocabulary that seemed irrelevant forty years later. We watched *Vertigo* and discussed its follies. All happened around a dinner table.

We do not claim to be feminists. Marieke reads *Why I am not a feminist*. Jue refuses to take the label for granted. “Feminism,” says Susanna during our first gathering, “is really humanism when you think about it.” Reading Mulvey was a starting point. From there we depart.

Our conversations, for the most part, pertain to our own practices. As we sat around the dinner table, we agreed and disagreed. We debated, questioned, responded. We ate and drank with earnest curiosity about each other’s work and critical reflection on our own fascinations.

SUSANNA'S APARTMENT

FRITTATA WITH
SPINACH, MUSHROOMS AND COURGETTES

HOMEMADE CRISPY BREAD

DIPS

CHEESE

ROASTED NEW POTATOES WITH MUSTARD

HOMEMADE BANANA AND CACAO SORBET

WINE

J: oh it's already recording? It's ok we'll cut out like a minute or two from this one, yeah.

S: Ok. Who wants to go first?

J: You

S: Oh, I do?

(We laugh)

S: Ok, great. So, following up from the last recording... I thought quite a lot about the question that I know we are meant to answer which is: 'what is the thing...' what was the question? 'what is the thing you're reading...'?

J: 'what are you reading now and... what's the most important thing that you're reading, or what's the most relevant thing'

S: to your practice, yes.

J: yes

S: I've read a bunch of things and I found all of these things quite interesting and relevant but they lacked something. After our beloved Laura Mulvey

(We laugh)

I've read other chapters and bits from different books: Jacqueline Rose's *Sexuality in the field of vision* I didn't read the whole book. It's quite interesting. There's a lot Freud, again, which, I'm like 'I got it! Can we move on with our lives?'

(J and M laugh and nod)

And then Judith Butler's *Bodies that matter* which I found quite hard to read to be honest with you guys. It was dense, and yes it was interesting but not very easy to read.

I also wanted to have a look at the history of the feminist film theory. This is a book that I have since

Commented [1]: Rose, J. (2005) *Sexuality in the field of vision*. 2nd edn. London: Verso.

Commented [2]: Butler, J. (2011) *Bodies that matter*. 2nd edn. London and New York: Routledge.

my BA, *Cinema studies: the key concepts* by Susan Hayward, it's this big dictionary where you can look up the main concepts of film studies. And it's quite nice 'cause it sums up the different waves of feminism and feminist film theory as a consequence. So that was good just to have a little overview of how it evolved.

I read some chapters from this other book, *Feminism and the visual culture reader*, it has articles and essays from different authors. It's interesting because this edition is the second one so I think from 2010 maybe? So not too old and fairly up to date. In here I found texts from the 70s like Mulvey and Berger and then very recent pieces.

Something that I realised this morning: I was re-reading the very first paragraph of the introduction, she is writing this not long ago and yet so much has happened in the meantime. I'm just gonna read a couple of lines, the person writing is the editor of the book, Amelia Jones, the title of the introduction is 'Conceiving the intersection of feminism and

visual culture, again': "I write this revised version of my original introduction to the first edition of 'Feminism and the visual culture reader' over half a decade later on January 20th 2009, the day of Barack Obama's inauguration as president of the United States". So, even just this, she writes this second edition in 2009 which is only 10 years ago which for academic theories it's a fairly short amount of time. I'm imagining Jones writing this as Barack Obama gets ready to be the president and then...that ended. And now Trump is the president of the US and everything that is happening in Alabama. So it's interesting because when we look at Mulvey's stuff, or that wave of feminism in general, we see it as very outdated but then also a text from 2009 can show us how times have changed so quickly and how some things have even gone backwards.

So, these are the main texts I have been reading. Plus, the article that Marieke recommended and some other articles on an online magazine that Kate Briggs suggested called 'Another gaze'.

Commented [3]: Hayward, S. (2013) *Cinema studies: the key concepts*. 4th edn. London and New York: Routledge.

Commented [4]: Jones, A. (ed.) (2010) *The feminism and visual culture reader*. 2nd edn. London and New York: Routledge.

Commented [5]: www.anothergaze.com

All this was interesting and informative but I realised that nothing was very specific to me and to my practice, and what I understood is that the main thing that right now relates to my practice is the work of a director, which I already spoke about in this group, Jill Soloway, because I really like their work and because I have read several interviews and articles that she wrote. *They* wrote, 'cause now they are not a she anymore. I find not just the films, but also the kind of discourses and the kind of conversations they are trying to have to be very interesting and relevant and perhaps even more up to date compared to some academic texts that I have been reading; it's just a different platform, I guess.

And, funny enough, I remembered that I wrote some notes years ago and I managed to find them. I was listening to Jill Soloway's talk on the female gaze, and this was like 3 years ago, and the notes I took are basically very similar in content to the notes I've been taking recently on these other texts. So, the talk starts with Soloway summing up Mulvey's *Visual pleasure in narrative cinema* just to state what

the male gaze is, as intended in classical american cinema, or white cinema anyways, first world cinema. Let's call it first world cinema.

Soloway tries to explain that we have established what is, or at least was, the male gaze - I'm not going to go through that again cause we know what it is, right? - and I like that at the beginning of the talk Soloway establishes her position saying (I'll paraphrase) 'I am white, I lived most of my life as a straight female, in the United States, so I am aware that there is a ton of other issues but I am not informed enough to make a proper and fair argument. So, I am aware that there are issues of race and class and other things but for now I'm just going to talk about the female gaze'.

I appreciate this kind of approach of 'I know only about this thing so let's not have an uninformed opinion about other things.'

Soloway talks a lot about intersectionality. There is a point that I find interesting and I don't know if it's exactly relevant to my practice but I think it might.

Commented [6]: A transcript of Soloway's talk is available here: <https://www.toppleproductions.com/the-female-gaze>

It's a quote from this talk that is 'Art is propaganda for the self. I don't know if you agree, but it made me think that maybe it's true. For some people in a more conscious way, for some people may be less but this quote really stuck with me.

Then Soloway starts to explore what is the female gaze, there are 3 points - this piece of paper with notes is from 3 years ago, so I don't know how well I took these notes so maybe I'm leaving bits out - feeling seen, the gazed gaze and the returning gaze; the female doesn't want to be the object anymore but wants to be the subject. Soloway also talks a lot about camera movement and a sort of different way of using the camera, something more instinctual that does not necessarily care too much about the whole illusion, the whole cinematic illusion. It's interesting because the films that Soloway makes are still narrative films, they are not crazy experimental, but watching them I can sort of see that there is a difference, there is less...it's hard to explain, I should have brought screenshots!



But when she talks about female gaze it's a lot about the actual language of cinema, how you move the camera, it's quite specific - Feel free to interrupt whenever you like!

And then, this other piece of notes! I watched *I Love Dick* the TV adaptation of Chris Kraus' book, directed by Soloway. I can't remember how many episodes are there, not too many. I really liked it. These notes that I rediscovered are interesting to me, I remember watching it and writing down things that I noticed, that seemed worthy of writing down. One is 'sexual consent within a long a term

Commented [7]: I love Dick. (2016). Amazon Video, 19 August

Commented [8]: Kraus, C. (1997) I love Dick. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

relationship: when she refuses to give her husband a blow job and he makes her feel guilty. Or does she make herself feel guilty? She has a fascination for the macho, the cowboy, which is the guy, Dick, and on the opposite, there is her husband who is this intellectual man who is not very macho. Have you guys watched it? Or read the book?

M: I've read about it

S: ok, so more or less you know the story?

M: yes

S: There is a moment in episode 1 where Dick is looking straight into the camera during a dinner scene telling the protagonist that she doesn't really want to be a filmmaker and that there are not really good female filmmakers. She goes to this dinner with him and her husband and she really wants to impress him because she is a filmmaker but she is not very successful, she makes experimental weird films and she gets really offended and loses her

temper while these two men are looking at her with the classic 'oh you silly, emotional woman' look while they are very calm and cool.



And then I made all these other notes like 'the editing is great!!!' with all the exclamation marks and 'the soundtrack is perfect!!!'

J and M laugh as I theatrically quote my own notes and swing my arms in excitement for the production values of 'I love Dick'.

S: then there is this note which I am assuming is something that she says? 'dead films are like dead babies' and then there is a *creativity as ovulation... I don't know why I wrote this down hahaha but, anyways. There is also in my notes the whole idea of the female monster: women should always be good mothers and when they are not, they become this monster.

And then (more notes): she uses Dick as her muse, the object of her desire and she writes almost pornography about him and Dick finds this humiliating.

I don't know how much of this actually happened because the tv adaptation is based on the book and the book is based on a real-life experience, I don't know how truthful this whole thing is. But I tried to

put it in a context: we are talking about people in their... I don't know, how old is Chris Kraus? 50?

M: yes, I think so

S: something like that. And Dick, this guy, is maybe 60? I don't know, I'm just assuming from the look of Kevin Bacon on the screen. So, what I mean is that this kind of dynamic of subverting the gaze and staring at him, desiring him, writing this very sensual letters about him and for him, using him for her own pleasure is this very classic reverse power structure. I find it interesting cause it's something that that generation of artists in general perhaps felt the need to do more than people do now. Maybe now we are just barely passed that point, but for them it was subversive at the time.

This all thing is to say that I felt that this is probably not what was asked of me for this assignment, but the main thing that is relevant to me right now is actually reading Soloway's films with complementary information coming from academic

Commented [9]: Chris Kraus was born in 1955.
Dick Hebdige was born in 1951.
Sylvère Lotringer (Kraus' husband) was born in 1938.

texts. Analysing the body of work of Jill Soloway, it's relevant for me. She also wrote, oh I keep on saying she but she is not a she. The main things that they have written and directed are *Transparent* which is a TV show, *I love Dick* and then there is the feature film *Afternoon Delight*. Soloway's work triggered my interest in feminist film theory. First of all because I admire their work as a filmmaker, I just really enjoy watching these pieces. And I also realised that in the work that Soloway makes there is a lot of theoretical and academic knowledge. It's very intentional. Soloway has an interesting story as a person because she went from being a straight woman, married, with kids, and now they present themselves as a non-binary person. Neither male nor female. Biologically they are female but they don't want to be in either box, they just want to exist as a person. This is an interesting journey in itself. Soloway is not a philosopher as such because she does not have a Ph. D, but as a thinker is a very modern person who is very aware of the importance of intersectionality and I admire that.

J: can you explain to me what intersectionality is?
Just to be clearer on the term

S: yes, the way I see intersectionality it's that is a place where different forms of oppression get together and are linked. So, as we are aware, feminism from the 70s achieved some great things but it was very white and very straight so it left out several other oppressed groups. To me if one declares to be an intersectional feminist it means that they are also aware of other groups that are oppressed and in their fight, they don't leave them out. Is that also how you guys see it?

J: I like this vocabulary

M: yeah, me too!

J: but I can't really say yes or no. It sounds that if you have read related literature you would know this term but if you haven't it's more academic the way...

S: what do you mean? sorry, go ahead

Commented [10]: Jill Soloway graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison as a communications arts major.

J: it's just my experience with the word, I just don't know this word in this context

S: I only know it in this context. I hear it and use it in conversations about human rights. So, for example the Black Lives Matter movement it's very important but to make it intersectional it should not forget about queer people, you know? So, to me personally being a feminist means being an intersectional feminist, so I want equal rights for all genders but I also want equal rights for all races, sexual orientations, classes. That's how I see it.

Don't quote me on the definition of the term though! It's the place where everyone that is defined as 'other', everyone that is oppressed, comes together.

M: I think for me is the same cause when I read that book *Why I'm not a feminist* they also explain it in the same way. And I also read about how the first wave of feminism left a lot of people out and that also relates to human rights but I don't see it a lot in film theory

S: yes, is not about film theory, it's more about feminism in general and human rights. Cause if you're a feminist but you are let's say Islamophobic then you are not doing intersectionality right. You are doing it wrong!

M: in the book *Why I'm not a feminist* she says that when they were fighting for jobs nobody was fighting to become a cleaning lady, everyone was fighting to become a lawyer because women of colour already did the lower paid jobs

S: that's a very good example, yes. I think class it's a very big component of it. At least in Europe or in the US class and race are very much linked.

So all this content, which is academic but also comes from articles and magazines and podcasts, I find it super interesting and I really enjoyed reading, listening and watching all of it. I want to keep this knowledge and I hope it will inform my practice and also just me as a person.

Commented [11]: From the Oxford Dictionary of English: intersectionality | ɪntəsɛkʃəˈnælɪti |
noun [mass noun]
the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage: through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us.

When I make my work I'm not thinking if I am being intersectional enough, I hope I am but let's face it I am probably not. I don't want to be too self-conscious about it while I am making things as I already tend to overthink.

I am trying to read Soloway's films just as films, as visual art. I am looking at the language used in these pieces. For example, in *I love Dick* I remember a few interesting things: it's a narrative based TV show, it's very entertaining, in a way it is mainstream. But there are a few notes on this: the use of title cards reminds me of early silent cinema, they are also modern as they use this bright red and bold font and they are not part of the credits, they are in the middle of the episode like 'DEAR DICK' WRITTEN REALLY BIG ON THE SCREEN. There is also voice over. There is a beautiful episode where all the female characters deliver a monologue, there is a beautiful landscape, dry, desert like. They talk about Dick and how they got to know him as artists or colleagues; but really the monologue is about themselves as artists. At some point there is a

choreography but it's a little strange because it's not fully diegetic. Soloway in this specific case has a very different aesthetic and language that I believe it's worth looking at and taking in. Especially because she uses all these elements, the title cards, the choreography, the voice overs, the monologues, the looking straight into the camera, she uses all these things in the setting of a narrative piece, a traditional narrative. I almost feel that I want to steal, be inspired by Soloway's style. I really really like it. It's fascinating to me. I think what I will do is take a scene and analyse it almost shot by shot or something like that. I searched a lot on JSTOR and there is almost zero literature on Soloway. I guess I'm gonna use the other texts as a support, a theoretical support and then just read the films.



J: how does this relate to what you are making now?
Or can you talk a little bit about what you are making now?

S: yes, you are right, I forgot! Slightly forgot about that!

J and M laugh.

S: the main thing I am working on now is this project with the polaroids. I took pictures of parts of my body with a polaroid camera and I apply this process of 'destroying' the picture and I end up with

one layer of this photograph that then I can re-apply onto another surface. But without getting too much into the technique, that's another conversation, I was never and I'm still not comfortable in front of the camera. It makes me cringe.

Not just because I don't like my image in the picture but also, I'm not too sure what to do and it makes me very uncomfortable. I never took pictures of myself, I think I'm one of the few humans that does not take selfies. I just don't see the purpose of it. What do I do with that? This whole thing of photographing myself is very new to me.

In mainstream visual culture the woman is usually the object that is looked at, having this privilege to being able to instead point the camera at whatever I want and choosing to pointing it at myself - this specific act is really framed into this conversation that creators of images that are not strictly straight white men we have managed to get this far and changed the usual language of cinema. Out of all the things that I could have taken photos of I have taken pictures of myself. So, this fascination with this

director, my interest in these texts in general...I keep on using my hands as if the phone could record my gestures, I'm moving them a lot FYI!

J and M laugh -

I forgot what I was saying...

As someone who would like to create culture and have the chance to do so in the context of this institute, I'm exploring this usually theoretical topic in a more practical way. I've read a lot about male and female gaze and I watched a lot of things, both from the 20th and 21st century, I'm trying to wrap up these interests and this knowledge into something that I actually do. I Just pointed the camera at myself and I'll see where that takes me with keeping in mind where I came from. Does this make sense?

J and M nod

J: You mentioned...cause you put Jill Soloway as your... you are going to study her very closely, or them. Are you considering her cause of her...her, sorry their! Their, their, their! Are you considering them because of their relevance in this is body of theory and how it aligns with your own view? Or more about the aesthetics? Cause you said it's beautiful!

S: I was attracted to Soloway's work at first because of the aesthetics, I didn't even think about what this director has read and what they have studied. I just really loved the aesthetic choices, this looks just amazing and interesting and it's different and yet very entertaining, you know? That was the first layer.

And then I realised that, like us, Soloway read all these mountains of texts. Cause once you read these texts you can't avoid seeing the theories on the screen.

But the main thing that I find interesting is that Soloway is talking about this search, cause they have not found it yet, **this search for the female gaze**. The male gaze has theories and rules, the female gaze does not have that yet and Soloway attempts to draw a few things. So the way I see it, maybe Soloway does not agree, is that those aesthetic choices I just mentioned are the search for a gaze that is not the usual one.



And I am doing the same search, as someone that grew up in a conservative country and watched that

kind of media, I feel that the established gaze is very much part of myself as all the things you watch and read in life. Can I just leave all that behind? Can I at least remember all that but manage to put in on the side and move on? Let's look for something more interesting, more progressive, more inclusive. Does this make any sense?

M: it does, yes. Definitely. With your polaroid project do you see a connection with intersectionality?

S: Not so much to be honest. Because it's very personal work, I am pointing the camera at myself. I think it's probably the opposite of intersectionality. It's such a specific topic.

As a human being in general I try to be aware of things that surround me, I would like to have that kind of humanist approach that we spoke about: don't leave the others out while you are fighting for yourself.

In this specific moment I am just doing my search, how do I look at things? How do I look at myself? Having a female body, how do I then present it? Soloway is an inspiration, if I had a mood board Soloway would be there, the style, the choices, the camera movement, the editing, the writing. **What relates my work to these readings, of the texts and the films, is the search for a fresh, a freer perspective.**

J: when you say that you have never taken selfies, or you were never motivated to do so, that to me is a such a refreshing perspective. Because now the act of pointing the camera to yourself is almost... a lot of us don't even think about it, or have stopped thinking about it. Now, since we are in this course we reflect on this more. In the past I have reflected on it more as a cultural phenomenon. But I don't really think about the relationship between the camera, the gaze and the self. As you are searching it sounds very...almost profound that you pick this journey in this direction. It's already really courageous to do something that

you didn't find easy before. A part from the theories, the drive to do this is also something that is very interesting to hear.

S: and something that I thought about afterwards: after all the readings I was gathering my thoughts to prepare for this research group and I realised that this director that I am so fascinated by, Jill Soloway, has made this other really important work *Transparent* which is autobiographical. It talks about the family she grew up in, the journey that she made from being a straight female to being a non-binary person. And *I love Dick* is based on Chris Kraus' book which is also autobiographical. This link with autobiography and personal topics is not intentional.

I am aware that I grew up in a catholic country, watching really bad TV...so bad. And from a young age I was looked at in a certain way by men and I accepted it because I thought that's how it is. Is that normal?

M: I remember that I had this conversation with my sister once when I was around 13 and I told her ‘I notice now that boys look at me differently but also girls, I feel that girls look at me now wondering if they are better or not’ you know? Like in high school? Who is prettier?

J and S agree

M: It’s the moment you realise you are not a child anymore and I remember it as kind of traumatic actually, it’s weird and horrible that from that point on when you cross the street that there is a possibility that you get catcalled which just does not happen when you are a kid. And then you have to deal with all of this stuff.

S: I remember the very first time that I was catcalled, I was like 11

J: wow

S: I was like ‘sorry, what?’ I didn’t understand what the man said and then my sister was with me and she started shouting at him and insulting him and I wasn’t even sure about what had just happened. Did he ask for directions? What’s going on here? I really did not have a clue.

M: I remember I became super self-aware from that point, I felt less safe everywhere. You become so aware of what you look like and what you are. I think there is a similarity with you that I hated taking selfies. At the beginning of the year I took like 30 selfies and I destroyed all of them. Remember? I just printed them on regular paper and I dunked thinner on top of it and then removed the ink. I had a talk with the tutor and they said that it really spoke of self-hate. But it wasn’t that, I was just trying to erase your own presence, or trying to make it different

S: more than presence is this thing of existing while you are been looked at. Can we just remove the being looked at part? Can we just exist?

M: yes, it was an attempt to do that, to remove that feeling

S: yes, that layer. I don't hate taking selfies, I just never do it. I took selfies for practical reasons like if I don't have a mirror then I'll use my phone, but then I delete the pictures. But otherwise I don't see the point, what would I even do with a selfie? I guess the bottom line is that I am afraid that this so-called male gaze I cannot escape it, escape it not as the object that is being looked at but as someone that also looks at things and makes things. In that way. I am afraid that maybe I was influenced too much. Maybe I'm just being paranoid, I'm overthinking this for sure. For me is a very recent thing to consider myself an artist, so as I am looking for my own way of making things, my own style and voice, I am also aware of where I come from. I would like to make something different.

J: What I find interesting is...when you said that in your polaroid project you are pointing the camera at yourself and then for you in the insomnia project

you are also pointing the camera at yourself. What is the difference between this and the selfie?

M: With the insomnia project at first when I filmed myself, I did wonder if I was making a narcissist thing? It was so weird to make recordings of myself. Why would you do this? And later when I was reading the book about mirrors and reflections in cinema, I thought that making recordings of yourself is like looking in the mirror. But if you take a selfie you try to take a good portrait, when you are filming yourself while unable to sleep you can try to look nice but it's way more difficult. Or at least that's how I felt. I felt way more vulnerable and even if I did post these photos, they would just look ridiculous or weird. I wouldn't always be happy with the way I presented myself in front of the camera but I still kept them and I showed them.

So I guess there is a big difference but I think when I look at a selfie is not the same as in a mirror and maybe it's a bit coincidental the moment you turn around and you look and think of adjusting your

hair; but the moment you take a selfie everything is already in place and you keep taking more until you take the perfect one. With the insomnia recordings there is never a perfect recording, which is the whole point. At first, I thought I would as many as possible until it would look natural which of course it's impossible because it's not natural to point a camera at yourself at night. But i think what I meant is until it feels more honest, cause in some recordings you see the exhaustion, and in some others, you wonder what is this girl doing on her bed? Maybe you don't really get the link with exhaustion. A lot of them are interesting in different ways. It's nice to have some questions about narcissism, self-reflection because also when I asked you about intersectionality there was also a worry about my own work, cause all of this is self-portraits. This doesn't really touch the lives of many other people, except if they also experience insomnia, but I don't know if it engages with society or maybe it will later. But I think it's something that is important.

That's also why this project was sometimes troubling for me because I thought who am I making this for? Which is something that you have in mind when you make something.

J: it can also just be for yourself. I think a lot of work I make, now that I look at it, it's for myself. And maybe some other people would relate, or recognise themselves. But some much of what I make, I make it because it's important for me. In the past I always felt that I had to justify the work in some other way.

M: exactly

J: but these days I'm like... just make it!

JUE'S APARTMENT

POTATO ZUCCHINI TART WITH
AGED CHEESE AND ROSEMARY

CARROTS

HUMMUS AND TAPENADE

CHOCOLATE

COFFEE

WINE

S: Jue, darling, sweetheart — what are you reading that is relevant for your practice?

J: I recently finished reading this random paper I found on JSTOR. I guess it's not so random since I typed in the keywords. It's a very academic paper called *Emotions and the Structuring of Narrative Responses*. It's written by a professor from a Literary and Film Studies program — back in the days, they bundle these two together in the same department. This paper is his survey of how emotions work when people read something. So, for example: when you read a passage, how do you feel? When I read it I felt so enlightened. He quotes all these other studies, theories and his own informal studies with his students, trying to figure out what evokes emotions, what functions emotions have, and what emotions are, basically. From day one of this program I find myself thinking about empathy. I deem empathy something I try to create. This paper is a gateway to all the other things I would like to read more about. I will give you an example:

My take-away from this paper is the indication of the studies: they clarify the process of emotion and introduce useful vocabularies. For example, "literary reading seems likely to provide a continuously renewed array of affordances: each point of ambiguity represents a nexus of affective possibilities." (Ellis 2005)...

That's still too academic. One further example is this study on what kind of passages evokes more feelings — it's just one study, so please don't take it as the absolute truth — through the study they indicate that when you describe something or set an atmosphere, people feel more. It's interesting for me to know. The paper deals with the realm of literature and literary studies, but I take this idea to experiment with my own image-making.

I am making films. I have never made films in this formal way. So right now, I feel I am a very conservative filmmaker. I use the ideal shutter speed, I control the focus, it's like filmmaking 101. I am following those things. Through the different projects I'm making, I've begun to realize more and

Commented [13]: Ralph Ellis's Curious Emotions: Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning, which I found out from the bibliography of this paper, is on my reading list next.

Commented [12]: Miall, 2011.

more how I should place the camera and develop this intuition. My decisions so far are more or less guided by the narrative. Narrative is important to me. This paper is a gathering point for me to start thinking about narrative again.

I have categorized my reading into affect, memory, screens, cinema space and cinematography. Under each category I've read different things. Other than this paper, another relevant reading is David Mamet's *On Directing Film*, a series of lectures he gave to film students at Columbia in 1987. David Mamet is a screenwriter and playwright, then he became a director. When he talks about directing it's very much about the dramatic logic of a story. When I read him I was reminded of the training I got when I wrote plays. Perhaps my teacher and he were from the same generation, and they used almost the same techniques. There's some technical stuff, I don't know if I should get into...

S: A specific example?

J: In Mamet's account, he thinks the director's role is to create the shot list. So you break down the film into scenes. In that sense he works very much like a director for theater. You do a scene, and for a scene you go into each beat. The beat is the unit. Each beat then translates to a shot. That's how he works. In these lectures, he developed shot list of films with students. He then evaluates if the shots are dramatically sound. He's such a dry guy, witty and dry, and he follows Eisenstein's montage theory:

Throughout the book he emphasizes the uninflected shots. He offers the pragmatics of Eisenstein's montage: "a succession of images juxtaposed so that the contrast between these images moves the story forward in the mind of the audience."

That's the essence of how he works. He pushes the story that way. He also admits he doesn't know where to put the camera. He says that on set you observe as the director, and if someone asks about camera placement, you would say "over there." If you have done the homework and developed the

Commented [14]: The categories wax and wane as I continue my reading. From time to time I re-organize them.

Commented [15]: Mamet, 1992. I have not read the original text of Eisenstein. I am reading André Bazin at this point, who might be an entry to that era of film theories.

shot list, you know that wherever you point, it will come out of those days and your decisions will not be far off where the camera should be.

I kind of disagree with him. His knowledge stops at the dramatic level.

S: What do you disagree with?

J: I disagree with his statement that as a director you don't have to know where exactly you place the camera. I want to know. It's important to me. To him it's not as important, maybe because he's working with a bunch of cinematographers and he trusts them. There can be different dynamics and roles. When I read about his ambivalence of the position of the camera, I am reminded that I am not him. This kind of reminder is good.

Right now I am editing my most recent film. I have two sets of footage: one set from myself and the other from Cem. Before the shooting we reached decisions. "Cem, you go for those wide shots. When

I shoot the close-ups of the protagonist, you go somewhere else and capture b-roll materials." I said things like, "look for birds because birds will end up important, and families." I gave Cem some keywords then we set out for the shoot.

When I was shooting Renate, the protagonist, on site, I was already thinking: what am I looking at, why do I want to see her face, how long do I want to see her face. Those questions did come to me during the shoot. But as I edit, I feel I must know more or less where the camera will be and preferably, more precisely. One thing I am facing in the editing process is that I hate dealing with a big amount of footage. It's really tiring. Sometimes when I am in the beginning of it, the choices seem infinite and it's hard to power through in a way. It took me a while to start editing the materials because of all the organizations and the trial-and-error.

I am not trying to adhere to any filmmaking method established by other people. My own method right now is: I do this thing, I try a few things out, and at

Commented [16]: While the communication and the workflow of filmmaking might be part of the standard curriculum at a film school, directing is relatively new for me. The dynamics from directing constantly takes me out of certainty. It reminds me of other instances in my life as a deliberate communicator (e.g. as a designer writing up design scope for a client, or directing a helper in the kitchen.) It is frightening when I don't know the lingo or even the details of my visions. This is a note to self.

some point I can get to a level where I can trust my intuition. Right now I don't have that intuition. To me it has been like editing in the dark.

S: So do you go to the shoot with a shot list prepared or not?

J: In the shoot with Renate, not really — I mean, or I'd say yes? I didn't really know the site. I knew the person. I knew the activity we were going to do. To me, this is sort of a documentary. You can also say it's an actor-directed film.

S: Can you tell us what the film is about?

J: I will tell you about the project. What I am making with Renate is one of the short films I make surrounding the theme of loss. That's the short version. I met with her before the shoot. She talked to me about her story. She shared with me some deep stories and I was like, "wow, thank you for entrusting me with your story and the memory of someone who passed away." Together with her I suggested an activity we could do. In my mind, I

was asking: how can I translate this into images? So I asked her, "would you like to write a letter to him?" She said yes. Then in our discussion we figured out where we were going to shoot. In this particular snippet — I call them snippets because I don't know if they are going to stand as films on their own, or if the footage from different people I film becomes a singular piece — we decided to shoot Renate write a letter to a deceased person in this land art piece by James Turrell. It's near The Hague, at the Kijkduin beach. That was the setup. Because I had decided to recruit Cem to be on a second camera, we met with her together again and clarified our plans.

On site, however, I did not have a shot list because I didn't really know — in my mind I had broken it down into this: we follow her, we have an establishment shot of the place, then we follow her actions in this place. To me this following her is a documentary method. It's hard for me to say that I definitely want or will get this or that shot. Actually, there was one shot that I had a clear idea of. But we

Commented [17]: I learned this term from watching *Vulnerable History (A Road Movie)* at IFFR 2019, directed by Koki Tanaka.

"Tanaka applies his characteristic workshop style, in which Christian and Woohi determine the course of the conversation..." from the film's IFFR page

Commented [18]: The discovery of this theme was not intentional, but it seems to perpetuate in my recent endeavors including *Fold* (photobook) and *Seek* (film).

Commented [19]: I have started reading *Documentary*, another anthology by White Chapel. I notice documentary coming up over and over again in my rhetoric here (and thoughts in general), which I feel the strong need to articulate.

didn't end up getting it because we didn't take the metro. She went somewhere else and was coming to the site from near The Hague. Otherwise I had this clear vision of this shot on the metro where she would look out, followed by another shot of a house she used to live in.

But yeah, I didn't have a shot list and I am in the editing. It feels like I simply do not know. I am making do with uncertainty. I didn't edit it in a straightforward way in the beginning as in: we go, she enters, she unpacks her things, writes the letter, walks around, there's stuff happening, etc. etc. I didn't edit this way first because, maybe it's starting to connect to things about memory I'm reading. Memory has been popping up in my research. I will refer to this text by...Siegfried...Kracauer.

S: Kracauer?

J: Yeah, this guy.

S: I don't know him.

J: I don't know him, either. His name popped up a few times. He's like a...

S: His surname...I know a Kracauer who has a different first name.

M: You are thinking about Kerouac now. That's a different guy.

S: Not Kerouac. I am thinking about a Kracauer, but I don't think it's him. Anyways, tell us everything about him.

J: Okay. I read about him somewhere in *The Cinematic* anthology. His came up as one of the canonical texts. Then I came across him again in the *Memory* anthology.

S: He's your guy.

J: Well, in the first one I sort of dismissed him. But in *Memory*, there is an excerpt from him called *Memory Images*. I came across this term memory

Commented [20]: I trailed off from here on into the next topic. To complete this line of thought in annotation: I decided to edit in a non-linear, non-event-based way because I was interested in what she thought of and what she felt. In other words, I was (and am) more interested in the interior of the characters and wanted to use editing to show them. It is conceptually fertile, but difficult in practice, which is one of the struggles I have now.

images also from different places. So before I talk about memory images I want to say that coming across terms from dispersed places seems to be a way I read. A term might come from here or there. I register it. And some time later, I see it in a different place. Things to me are loosely connected. Reading to me is not about immediate or linear relevance. I highlighted from *Memory Images*:

Compared to photography memory's records are full of gaps.

There is a whole body of literature about photography as traces or photography as testimony. Here he's saying photography is not necessarily memory. Images from memory can differ from photography. This goes back to one of the reasons I chose cinema as my medium. I think moving images represent what I want to do more than still images.

S: Is it because they are moving images instead of still images, or is it because there is also the element of sound that photography lacks?

J: From one of our other conversations, I mentioned this article, *Photography and Fetish*.

S: By Christian Metz?

J: Yeah. He analyzes why photography is the medium for fetish. We can debate about it. We can crudely divide the medium of photography and that of cinema. Photography is what you can look at as long as you want, you can carry it around with you — there are many different things... Of course, this is only a kind of photography. My main point is, in contrast, cinema is a more deliberate act: you go in a space, and I'm talking about a more or less conventional cinema space; there is a start, middle and end. Cinema is a story, and cinema does have this dramatic structure.

I did not start the Master's thinking I would be telling stories. I wanted to disconnect with the term, storytelling, in the beginning. Other people have overused it in my past work in the name of journalism or branding. So storytelling was not

Commented [21]: For example: Heath, 1976. Wollen, 1984.

Commented [24]: Metz, 1985.

Commented [22]: Kracauer, 1927.

Commented [23]: I am alluding to the *Documentary* anthology.

always a great term. I had some negative associations with it. In the beginning I wasn't saying "I am into narratives, I want to tell stories" even though I knew I had a lot of stories to tell.

But with more practice with the medium of cinema, I am really looking at it in-depth. Until now I have always been a consumer, but not someone on the other side. After the photobook project (*Fold*) — actually after the EYE project (*Seek*), I was sure I wanted to make moving images.

With the moving image you don't dwell on what you are looking at. It appears. Then it goes somewhere else, depends on the editing of course. It's not just one image, it's not about the icon in a way. Each image can be beautiful or interesting, but that's something David Mamet would say no to. He doesn't want anything to be interesting, he wants the narrative itself to push the story forward rather than each image having something to say, a statement to make. But these are just different opinions. For me, I want each shot to be well-made,

not necessarily extravagant. When we saw the Parajanov films, he concocted each shot and everything is loaded with symbolism and meaning. It's very theatrical. It's a way of making each shot... I want certain shots to be memorable, but I want every shot to be well-made.

M: Can I ask you something? I read the book *Death 24 Times Per Second* by Laura Mulvey, which is about analog cinema and digital cinema. She says with the photo you get this fetishizing... She also says because film is digital now, of course in the cinema you cannot pause it, but let's say if someone saw one of your films at home and they put it on pause or they go back to a certain point — I do that with film sometimes — do you think that is similar to how you would look at photography or do you think that because it is part of a moving image, it's not a piece on its own?

J: If you release a film, there is a poster. When we submitted our films to the EYE, they asked for a still. They asked for one frame out of the thousand

Commented [27]: By extravagant I mean an obsession over technical details or stylistic choices when there the story does not call for those.

Commented [25]: To be more specific, I had trouble as storytelling becomes a label, which unfortunately starts to connote something manipulative. It happens when people try to profit from it (monetarily).

Commented [26]: Before the moving image, I have engaged with story-telling in different forms. Playwriting, stage storytelling, and an undergrad writing class called Nature Writing, are the most affirmative experiences to date. *Landscape and Narrative*, an essay by Barry Lopez in his *Crossing Open Grounds* (1989) was quite an enlightenment when I read it in my early 20's.

Commented [28]: Mulvey, 2005.

frames to somehow visually represent a film. I don't like fetishizing as a word. I am using it because Christian Metz used it. It's the relationship you have with these two mediums. With photography you can interpret at your own pace, whereas in cinema there is...

S: You are directed.

J: Yes. If someone goes back to a frame or makes a meme with ten frames, it's fine. It means that shot is visually interesting, and somehow it speaks to them aesthetically. Memes can be out of context — they take on their own lives.

S: I am lost on something. You are saying that you agree with Metz's argument that an image or subject in photography is easier to fetishize than in moving images?

J: No. He argues that photography is a more ripe medium for fetishizing. He wrote this essay in 1985, which was before the digital. VHS was present back then...?

S: It was. You are saying, or Metz is saying, that photography is the medium that supports fetishism?

J: Yes. It supports it. I will go back to my synopsis of his text here and hopefully I can find something relevant. He says there are a few differences between the mediums.

The first difference is the "spatio-temporal size" of the lexis.

So here he talks about the size.

Metz proposes that the "smallness" and "possibility of lingering look" make photography more likely to become a fetish... The second difference lies in the connection between cinema and collectivity and that between photography and privacy.

So he associates cinema with a more collective activity and photography with more personal.

S: Hence the easier use of photography for fetish.

J: Yes. I read this essay with its date in mind. He's from the same generation as Laura Mulvey.

S: Because he was writing in the 80's, the early stages of VHS, which had been around for 10 years perhaps, he was still in that context where cinema was mainly consumed in a movie theater, in the darkness where you are forced to sit and look. So I see it the opposite way. With photography, you consumed it in a gallery or on newspaper, which would be a more collective experience in that you would be interrupted by others. On the other hand, in the cinema, although you were sitting next to each other, you were in this very dark place, all staring at the same thing. You were together, but all in your own world.

M: It depends. With photography it depends on the photographer, and with moving image, the director. Some directors like Hitchcock, he made a whole lot out of fetishizing. That was what he did. In that

case, moving image can also create fetish. But I saw this exhibition from Olaf... He's Dutch. Oh shit, what's his name?

S: This person.

M: I am going to look it up now.

J: As you look it up, here's something from my synopsis on Metz:

A few descriptions from Metz are illuminating...

M: I found it. Erwin Olaf.

J: I will continue after you.

M: All his photos are composed. They say his photos look like film stills, but they are not. A whole team of makeup artists and costume designers are involved and everything is perfectly composed in a picture. With this kind of photography, fetishizing happens. But if I look at photography such as the

landscapes by Sonia, it's completely different. It's the same with the moving image. So everything depends on the maker and where you are...



Photography by Erwin Olaf



Photography by Sonia Mangiapane

S: And the context: who's in the image, where you are looking at it... the whole thing.

J: Definitely. Christian Metz is generalizing a lot of things. This is how he writes about fetish:

A fetish has to be kept, mastered, held like the photography in the pocket.

You can now have a frame printed out from a film for a so-called fetish that way. I think what he was doing was to offer a comparison of these two mediums at that point of history.

[In film] things are too unstable

He mentions movement in films, the fact that things move around.

S: I see his point that photography can almost be a painting, this iconic thing. My doubt is about the fact that he was writing in the mid-80's, when the main cinematic experience was still about a spectator

surrounded by other spectators — sitting down for two full hours in the darkness staring at the screen. But spectatorship, regarding both photography and cinema, has changed so much. Anything can be fetishized, or not.

M: Often when this fetishizing happens in the moving image there is a kind of stillness, which reminds me of a photograph. There is some sort of pose, especially with those weird old movies. Someone walks in and mmm [Marieke tries to strike a pose]. It is a moving image, but they make it still, and it does relate to photography.

S: That's true. During this whole conversation the one image in my head is the famous frame from *The Graduate*. With the triangle of legs which frame him in full figure. That is stuck in my head as a still image and there is no movement. Actually in the scene there is not a lot of movement. He just stands there and...has this awkward smile on.



Still image from *The Graduate* dir. by Mike Nichols

J: Recently I read this article from the 60's called *Cinematography: a Creative Use of Reality*. The author, who was a woman... Maya, so she was a she I guess. Back then there was no she or they. It was she or he in 1960...

S: Haha. Easier times.

J: She talks about how you capture the scene with the camera and turn it into something else. But I notice that she uses cinematography and photography interchangeably. I noted that

Commented [29]: Deren, 1960.

Photography is a synonym to images captured with a photochemical process (and thus used as a higher category for cinematography).

At some point photography was the catch-all term. This is going away from Metz, but if we are differentiating photography and cinematography it might be more useful to say still image versus moving image.

S: Yes. Often when people talk about the production of a film you hear “the main photography was so and so...”

J: Yeah. Director of Photography.

S: That was the technical processes of capturing the image, whether that was still or moving. Also, Chris Marker made a film out of still images.

J: [La Jetée](#).

S: Exactly. But the main point we are turning back to is that you don’t want fetishism in your own film.

J: No, I want narrative. I see these two things: aesthetics and narrative. I don’t want to focus on aesthetics, by which I mean I am not choosing a particular color before I have a narrative, or the idea for narrative. I feel right now in the projects I make I care about the narrative, and I care about the images — when they are edited together — the ability they have to evoke emotions.

One conversation I had during IFFR stuck with me. It was with a programmer from the Belfast Film Festival. I told her that I was drawn to the cinema and I cared about empathy. And she said, “cinema can be extremely empathic.” This wasn’t something I thought about a lot before IFFR. Why is it more empathic? Now it’s all coming together for me. I am looking for the medium for empathy and I have chosen cinema.

Commented [30]: Directed by Chris Marker, 1962.

M: I really get what you mean. At IFFR I saw *Video Home System* by Guusje America. She made this film about her family that, um, had a huge impact. What she did was she combined VHS footage from her family in the past and newer, digital footage. When the film was discussed later, they said the materials were put together very well. It was so raw, but it was very well edited. She also said she didn't care about aesthetics. For her it was also about creating a narrative. Thinking about this now — when you see the film the story was really important. This moment... when the revelation happens, everyone in the cinema was super quiet. I was thinking — to make a big emotional impact, it is possible to do that with aesthetics. But with her film, it was the personal qualities of the footage that did it for me, if I try to evaluate it visually. It is the narrative that is strong.

I want to ask you [Jue], maybe for you [Susanna] as well — do you think, with your films, that the emotional impact comes from narrative choices and

not so much from the aesthetic choices, the visuals? I guess you are aware of the visual part.

J: Yes. I am aware. I just mentioned I want the shots to be well-made. The way things look can have a huge impact — here we extend it to things, not just people — but I believe the emotional impact comes from narrative. When I wrote plays I would go in the workshop with a play ready and cast it to people. If it was a dialogue between two men, I cast two people plus someone who would read the stage direction. These three people would take the three chairs in the front of the room and read their respective parts.

That was how you would test if a play worked. If it worked you could really hear it. As you listen, you start to feel. “Wow, something is really happening to these people, they are dealing with something.” You feeling starts to sink in. That's what they call drama. David Mamet mentions this as well. He breaks down how this identification works. I first read about “identification” in the visual pleasure essay by

Commented [31]: Directed by Guusje America, 2018

Commented [32]: I decided to not include a screenshot of this film. A trailer is available on IFFR website. Having not seen the film myself and knowing that narrative carries the film, it does not make sense to make a visual reference.

Commented [33]: Mulvey, 1973.

Laura Mulvey. How do you identify with a character? In her analysis, if I remember correctly, it was a lot about gaze, the look of each other. As an audience you identify with the male protagonist, or the perspective of the male director.

But in narrative — why do you identify with something? How do you do that? I think the story itself is sort of the entry to identification. You start to care. It's like if you see a tragedy, you start to care about the hero. That's what Aristotle says in his *Poetics*. We need to see tragedy because we need to—

S: It's cathartic —

J: — to reach that state. That's why drama matters to me. I mean, narrative can have broader meanings these days, but when I say it I adhere to this dramatic structure that it implies.

S: So you mean story-based and not just, say, a landscape piece. It can be a story which may or may not be told in a linear way — that is not really the

point we are discussing. When someone mentions narrative, you think about story-telling, but it doesn't have to have a conventional structure. There is some human story happening.

Obviously, there is the tradition from theater in cinema. There was a whole conversation before the Oscars because they wanted to remove awards for editing and the cinematography. A lot of people complained because editing and cinematography are the two things that made cinema not theater, or photography, or fine arts. The camera is moving and you chop up the footage and move the bits around — that's what makes cinema what it is and its own art.

I watched a documentary called *Follow the Money* a few years ago. The quality of the image is very poor because they used old cameras. I can still remember the film because they met so many interesting people and you empathize with them. The film won a lot of awards. It resonated with many people. I watched it as part of a festival and everyone in the

Commented [35]: Here "visual presentation" would be more precise.

Commented [34]: Aristotle, 335.

Commented [36]: Directed by Steve Boggan, John Hardwick and Ben Unwin, 2015.

audience stayed for the Q&A because of the many interesting stories. No one cared about the blurry images... So, for now, you are saying you are more interested in being story-centered? Drama-centered?

J: I would say everything I make has a story to it, which is to say I am not making abstract, experimental pieces. I am using **this documentary method** where I follow people, but at the same time, I direct by creating the situation which they will inhabit. I am responsible for the ideas and what I want to achieve in the shoot, but she, the protagonist, can be doing whatever. If I see something that she does and I think it would work well post-shooting, I would say “let’s do that again.” In this sense I am still directing on-site, but I don’t want to impose all the time. The only time that I mention my idea at length is before the shooting. On site, I will tell her, “this is what I am going to do, you should feel free to do whatever you like, but if something interesting happens, I will let you know clearly.”

I think I am still developing this method. It’s kind of about finding boundaries while respecting the so-called reality. Well, reality can be a whole other body of discussions. We don’t have to talk about it now. The kind of documentary I am making is from this process of letting things go after setting the boundary. And then, yeah, it is my hope the story will be there. We will see. That’s my goal.

Meanwhile...I made something that counters what I just talked about. I created this loop of a photograph — not a photograph, actually, but something that has become a photograph. I made the loop out of a 10-second footage. I manipulated by slowing it down, changing the colors, etc. Everyone who has seen it tells me it looks like a still photograph, or a series of them that I animated. This piece is sleeping now because I need some distance from it. But it made me think: if I am, for the lack of the word, anti-fetish, then when I look at an image, what draws my attention? What keeps me looking? I wanted to create this loop because I had a few inklings...I don’t know...

Commented [37]: I elaborate the details of the method in my text on practice, 2019.

S: Let's say that you are anti-fetish, as in you don't agree with creating a fetish...

J: The footage is shot on a rooftop without any people. It's, I guess, a scene. I am trying to create a scene where you don't want to look away. There's no people in it.

S: I guess one can have a fetish that is not a person.

J: Fetish doesn't have to be sexual.

S: Exactly.

J: It acquired a sexual connotation.

S: What I wanted to say is, with anti-fetish you mean you do not want to create one?

J: Right now in narrative films, I don't really see any place for it. But from some conversations I have had with Barend, he said "there are no rules for documentary, you don't have to use one type of

image for it." It can be a super surreal image from a different world... I mean he made animations for Simon's documentary. So, *the Scene Where Nobody Looks Away*. Maybe I should finish making it.

S: It's something to question certain forms — maybe you don't fully agree with that form or use that form — but it is another when you make a piece that ends up somehow, being that form. You are pointing out "I am interested in this [concept of fetish], even though I don't want to make more of this" or "I don't want to use this form in a narrative piece."

J: That might lead to the last thing I want to talk about, which is the screen. I started reading a few chapters from *Screens*. These days when we see a movie, we see it on a screen — it is projected, that is the cinema space that we are familiar with. With *the Scene Where Nobody Looks Away*, the loop, I was thinking of projecting that onto the wall, perhaps in a gallery space.

Commented [38]: It is useful to define fetish here. From Marriam-Webster, it means:

1a: an object (such as a small stone carving of an animal) believed to have magical power to protect or aid its owner. broadly : a material object regarded with superstitious or extravagant trust or reverence

1b: an object of irrational reverence or obsessive devotion : PREPOSSESSION

1c: an object or bodily part whose real or fantasied presence is psychologically necessary for sexual gratification and that is an object of fixation to the extent that it may interfere with complete sexual expression

2 : FIXATION

3 : a rite or cult of fetish worshippers

Commented [39]: ed. Dominique Chateau and José Moure, 2016

With projection, it is something that can either be an entirely different thing, part of something else, or it can stand on its own. It can be as big and as small. Projection deserves more digging in because we take this form for granted. Cinema also means the space, and it comes with expectations. I am not saying *the Scene Where Nobody Looks Away* is not something I don't want to make again. I actually think it's really interesting. I mean, on its own, if it's projected on a gallery wall, it feels like, well, art.

M: I know what you mean.

J: By art I mean some kind of conceptual framework, et cetera. Not that I dismiss art — I live with artists!

S: We love artists.

J: If *the Scene Where Nobody Looks Away* can be part of a film, what does that do? I am really interested in that. I am not fully fleshing out this project because it is hard to do this and making the film I

mentioned at the same time — I have prioritized the narrative — but I really want to find space for the investigations of screens, or screen space. One chapter from the book is called *Archaic Paradigms of the Screen and Its Images*. It went back to Plato, the cave and the wall screen. Before the cinema screen, you have something for example like phantasmatography — light was projected from behind a sheet and you would see a ghost in the front. Or something like shadow theater. There were many ways of creating the image. Now we arrived at the cinema when we think of the cinema.

Another chapter is *Concept of the Mental Screen: the Internalized Screen, the Dream Screen and the Constructed Screen*. This author talks about the phone. You can watch a movie on a screen on the train. What is this to you? Is this a cinema space? In his argument, it is. It is cinema internalized. We are so engrossed by the screen that we miss the train stop.

These are food for thought. I don't really have any conclusions in terms of these readings. It just reminds me that there are a lot of variables in this medium that we call cinema. There is the process itself: of shooting, editing, blah blah blah, and then there is the physical space for which you can be critical about if you want. I'm not saying that I want to reinvent the cinema space. Reading these makes me more aware of what we are consuming and how we are consuming it, how we receive it.

M: It makes a lot of sense that you are interested in that. The screen or the projection can have a lot of impact. If I watch from a laptop, it makes less of an impression compared to when I sit in a cinema, see something big and without distraction. When I watch a film on a laptop in my room I am always aware that I am in my room. I am comfy... This sense of "I am sitting here and I am watching this" just has a different impact.

I want to ask you something related to what we talked about earlier. Sometimes when I show my

work to people they have different reactions from my own. You are focused on narrative and concerned with empathy. Do you follow your gut feeling to know what the impact would be or do you show to others and see how they respond? For the kind of work you are making, I guess the audience is pretty tied to it. Does this make sense?

J: Hmm. There is the event. I don't think the narrative is the event. Right now with what I am making, I'd say the narrative is in the title card. In the beginning, for two seconds. I need to think whether I put it in the beginning or in the end, because it's a reveal. I am depicting her writing a letter in this very unusual location. I cut away, then I have close-ups of her face. When she gets a bit distracted, I cut to this or that. I am very aware it is not clear she is writing a letter to someone who's passed away. The way I portray it, why is this person doing this and feeling this way? I am almost presenting this intrigue to others. So the narrative is not 100 percent in the shots I have in the particular

Commented [40]: I should articulate better here since the thoughts from my responses seem disjointed. I bring up articles from Screens because it is a surface or space which we end up looking at. The cinema is the screen and the sound, the timed lights and the darkness. This conversation about fetish is about a certain belief that comes with seeing and hearing and the kind of relationship that develops through seeing and hearing.

piece. In terms of gut feeling, I don't know if I understand what you mean?

M: For me empathy is a personal thing because it works in different ways for everyone. I guess you kind of need to follow your intuition, that's what I meant. But when you need to show it to others, they might feel very different...

J: I am kind of with Mamet on this one. He says again and again it's about uninflected shots. He is an opponent against narration and exposition. Let me read you this:

Now, don't you go 'establishing' things. Make the audience wonder what's going on by putting them in the same position as the protagonist. As long as the protagonist wants something, the audience will want something. As long as the protagonist is clearly going out and attempting to get that something, the audience will wonder whether or not he's going to succeed. The moment the protagonist, or the auteur of the movie, stops

trying to get something and starts trying to influence someone, the audience will go to sleep.

When I read that, I know from playwriting this is true. Dramatically speaking, this is true for both theater and cinema. Image-wise — as you mentioned the difference between theater and cinema is that you don't have to tell the story linearly... Actually, I don't know if there's any absolute structural difference. Mamet actually said this: there's a start, middle and end, Jean-Luc Godard says, not necessarily in that order, and that's why French cinema is so fucking boring. I don't know if Godard was after the aesthetic quality: was he trying to elicit this patience from the audience? I like to leave room for contemplation, but not so much that the audience starts wondering "I don't know what this shot is about," or "this is nice, but what is it?" I don't want to have those moments in my film. There are so many ways to show people and it doesn't have to be narration or exposition. Mamet used an example of someone painting a sign on the door, saying garage, followed by a shot of the

Commented [41]: I remembered this quote from a trailer from David Mamet Teaches Dramatic Writing on masterclass.com

garage — he opposes that. I really just need to make the film and see if the shots I choose fit. It's hard for me to say it is definitely bad or not. From his theory, it would be bad, but I don't always agree with him.

S: If you are talking about French films being boring, well — French New Wave in the 60's, considering people lived 50 years with Hollywood narrative cinema, this was woohoo! yay! different! fun! And now you look at it, you are like, guys, there is no fucking soundtrack, all these super long takes, handheld camera. It's very specific to a time and a place, like everything, art or whatever.

I'm not a huge fan of Godard, but I have seen his film and I have seen what came before and after. I see the point in that, why it can be interesting, and why it can be extremely boring. As someone who's not from the 60's, I watched it as part of my studies, I did not spend my Sunday afternoons as a teenager saying "oh yeah, let's watch Godard!"

What you mentioned about the screen — the classic cinema setting, this dark place that is the cinema and the projection, it's something I really like. I really enjoy experiencing that. Technology advances so now I can watch Hitchcock while on the Tube. But at the same time I can watch something abstract and experimental like we did at the EYE in a classic cinema setting...

J: I like the cinema setting. Now that we have this institution called the cinema we should really use it. It's a place where you go and let the images wash over you and let the narrative take you away. Personally I am not a big fan of the gallery setting, even though you can build a dark box or something like that...

S: Then you are recreating the classic cinema setting...

J: Yes, you are recreating it. And I really don't like this entry to a film during the middle. And I don't like the kind of movie which is built so that you can

Commented [42]: I conflated two perspectives from Mamet in this response and contradicted myself. I am with Mamet on the mechanisms of dramatic logic. The story has an arc leading to catharsis. I don't always agree with Mamet about specific imagery choices because narration and exposition in image is different from those in speech (as I discover) and he talks as if they are the same, and thus dismissing certain shots.

It's worth noting that I tiptoed around the gut feeling and referred to Mamet. I need to keep developing intuition. Confidence follows that.

enter in the middle and there is no difference. Now I know I care about the narrative and if someone goes in the middle of my film, I would say “no, no, no, you are not seeing it as it’s intended to be seen.” The whole point of empathy — now this is going to my bigger agenda. Hopefully no one will quote me years later on this...

M: Hahaha.

S: Jue, 2019.

J: Empathy is the moment when we understand another human being. If we are talking about humanism and intersectionality. Really understand the other. Really respect the other. Empathy is what you need to reach. What creates that? Now I choose cinema to create that.

M: I agree. In a motivation letter I wrote about empathy. It comes with relating. If you relate to someone at all — I don’t mean relate in a literal way, but more about understanding the situation and the

person — then empathy comes in. That’s how it works for me. If I have zero background information and things seem a bit abstract, then it’s hard for me to relate to another person. By relating I don’t mean they have to have the same background as mine.

J: The beauty is that they don’t have the same background.

S: Context is important. If you show me a Korean film from the 30’s, let’s say. It probably has a beautiful human story, but I will find it difficult to empathize. Korea in the 30’s would have different standards in aesthetics or narrative that I probably wouldn’t be able to get. It’s not even a matter of language — there are subtitles, you can dub it, whatever. Likely I would not get it because the context would be different. The cinema setting that we love so much — I mean, you [Jue] and me, do you [Marieke]?

M: Yes. The gallery setting feels outdated to me for some reason. But cinema doesn't even though it is old.

S: The cinema setting we are talking about works like this: you go in just before the film starts, you sit there in the dark, possibly without too much noise, although there's always that person who decided that crisps would be a good idea, and you leave hopefully when the film ends.

This setting actually existed for a very limited amount of time. My grandmother and my grandfather went on a date before they had my mom. They went to the cinema and watched *Ninotchka*, a film from the 40's. In Italy films always arrived a bit late. So we are talking about early 50's. The film was with Greta Garbo I would say, I don't remember. My grandma always tells this story. At the time films were just projected in a loop and you could get in at any time. They arrived in the middle. When the film ended and my granddad wanted to leave — she tells the story to criticize him not

because she's talking about the cinema setting of course — she says to him “you can not leave when you only watched it from halfway to the end!” He left. And she stayed and watched the whole thing. So at the time it was normal to come and go during the film. People talked during the film, brought food... That was the setting in the early 50's, which is not the setup the three of us are talking about right now.

VHS appeared in the mid-70's. That was when you would start consuming the same film at home. You pause it. You put the lights out. You fast forward. You rewind. This cinema setting that we are talking about, that I adore: most films are made for that. That setting only lived for 20 years with cabaret-style theater before and home video system after. And now we have other devices. But it's interesting how it really stuck with us. Hollywood aimed at creating the illusion and getting you lost in that. With empathy, you allow yourself to be in that world that the filmmaker has created for you. You

Commented [43]: I will keep reading the articles from Screens. This historical reference in media history is very interesting. Along with what I mentioned about cinema as an institution, there is the potential of cinema to become a place for empathy and healing.

get to know the characters. You feel for and with them.

Bibliography (current and near future)

Aristotle. (335) Poetics.

Bazin, A., Renoir, J., Truffaut, F., Andrew, D. and Gray, H. (2005). What is cinema?. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Miall, D. Emotions and the Structuring of Narrative Responses. Poetics Today 1 June 2011; 32 (2): 323–348.

Ellis, Ralph D. (2005). Curious Emotions: Roots of Consciousness and Personality in Motivated Action. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Mamet, D. (1992) On directing film. New York: Penguin Books.

Chateau, D. and Moure José (2016) Screens: from materiality to spectatorship - a historical and theoretical reassessment. Place of publication not identified: Amsterdam University Press

Campany, D. (2007) The cinematic. London: Whitechapel (Documents of contemporary art):

Wollen, P. (1984) Fire and Ice

Metz, C. (1985) Photography and Fetish

Farr, I. (2012) Memory. London: Whitechapel Gallery (Documents of contemporary art):

Kracauer, S. (1927) Memory Images

Lopez, B. H. (1988) Crossing open ground. New York: Scribner's.

McQuillan, M. (2000) The narrative reader. London: Routledge.

Heath, S. (1976) Narrative Space

Mulvey, L. (1975) Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema

Stallabrass, J. (2013) Documentary. London: Whitechapel (Documents of contemporary art).

Mulvey, L. (2015) Death 24 x a second: stillness and the moving image. Repr edn. London: Reaktion.

Deren, M (1960). "Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality," Daedalus, Vol. 89, No. 1, The Visual Arts Today (Winter, 1960), pp. 150-167

MARIEKE'S GARDEN

FOUR CHEESE RAVIOLI WITH

ASPARAGUS

ONION

GARLIC

CHILI PEPPER

GOAT CHEESE

LIME

PARMESAN

SPINACH

PARSLEY

BUBBLY DRINK

A DESSERT BOX NAMED "LOVE"

Starts with collaborative effort to open champagne bottle

Protecting the sophisticated house bunny Hans

S: What are either of you reading that you actually found pretty useful for your practice?

M: For me at the moment it is this text: Reflecting on Reflections which is about windows and mirrors in cinema. Mirrors are a metaphor or a frame and added depth in an image. It's interesting because in the text he talks about how you can visually direct people to look at a certain point and in the text he elaborates on complex mirror shots. In complex mirror shots you usually don't see the person in front of the mirror, you also don't see the camera in the mirror, but you just see the reflections. In real life of course, that wouldn't be possible.

S: What do you mean real life?

In real life when you use all of these mirrors and you position them in different angles, if you were the person who looked at that mirror you wouldn't see yourself like that. Because of the camera you can record it and that makes the difference.

S: Not sure if I understand, I guess it's the kind of thing that you need to see to understand.

J: Cause you were sort of referring to the work you are making, because you usually if you see yourself in the mirror, it's always you see yourself.

M: Yeah exactly.

J: The reflection at a certain angle, but the presence of the camera you can also see it different.

M: Yes.

J: And in this case you are filming yourself? Or it provides some interesting things for a work.

M: I'm filming myself and my friend: Oana and in the shots that I made of her, I can also show them to you later, but what happens is she sees herself either in multiple reflections and she looks at herself in the mirror while she's talking to me. So it's kind of like she's talking to her own reflection and I'm behind her, there is this big spot because night vision works with a light spot and my own face is really blurred. Because I'm in the dark and she is in the spot of the light, so when I talk to her you hear this really, or well David said it sounds like an ominous voice.

He said: you don't see you, you're not really there but there is just a slight presence of you being there. It's almost like that light spot is talking to her and we actually had really casual conversations. So nothing ominous about that but, he told me try to work that out because it is a very interesting power structure in your video again. Between the person who is in the reflection and then you who is filming there and then I thought that again relates to our

reading group. With what we started with, looking or gaze however you want to call it.

S: All different directions of who is looking at..

M: Yes! And it's interesting because it wasn't, in this case it's not about gender at all. It's about the act of looking at someone and the communication that takes place. I hope this explains it a bit more clearly, I started with the text because I relate to it.

S: What's the name of the text again?

M: Reflecting on reflections, they talk about how they did it in old cinema but also in new and how video-artists work with mirrors and reflections.

S: I have a question actually about this, why are you using night vision?

M: Uuuhm..

S: I think you have told me before but..

M: Yeah, I think it just kind of slipped into my visual language because now I cannot imagine myself not using it anymore. For me it's the same as using a normal camera now, it's just such a big part of the projects, they also all relate to each other. And I feel that even with the other girl it's not about insomnia, because with insomnia you can say I'm filming at night thus I'm using night vision. But when I filmed her it was in her bedroom and it was night, so again it had a bit of this intimate feel, even though there were two people there who were awake. It had nothing to do with sleeping, but again with this I couldn't imagine it without the night vision, it's supposed to be with the night vision for me.

S: It gives this kind of secrecy atmosphere I guess

M: And then also with night vision it always raises questions about voyeurism in a way and the act of looking, because it's actually dark so you really need to aim the spot at the person you want to look at, so it's more an invasion then when I would use a

normal camera. But it's the same for photography, I only use infra-red techniques, so I never, do it without like an infrared filter, without an infrared roll or without night vision. I always use it. Maybe this will change later but for now.

S: Okay, so is this footage you are taking with what's her name?

M: Oana

S: Oana, does it relate to the insomnia thing you were doing of filming yourself or not anymore, it has become a different thing?

M: Yeah, well it is still related with the themes because, I think with the insomnia project it's also about me being uncomfortable with being looked at. So that's also where I take different poses to feel less vulnerable in front of the camera, but also I spoke with David and he said maybe you can try to do a pose, until the pose collapses because you're

exhausted of holding in the same pose and then you catch that vulnerable moment.

S: Like a plank, how long can you plank.

M: Yeah haha, and it also still relates to the footage I shot of the other girl. I think for now I cannot say exactly like this works, or this, or it is about this, but maybe this sounds very simple but it's basically always about looking at another person and how that works. About a, I could say power structure but with the insomnia project I film myself, so I'm not sure how much of a power structure there is there, because I'm the one filming. But still when I did that I always had other people that could see me in my mind so, still they had some power over me.

S: It still felt like you were performing maybe.

M: Yeah, yeah definitely that's what I'm doing right now and what I'm reading right now.

J: Then let's just add a bit to the night vision from what you were saying it sounds like you want to reveal something. Or maybe that was first with the infrared attempts. It's almost like what you see is something, but there is something more, or what you see is not that thing. You want to sort of get to that layer or thing.

M: Yes that's exactly what it is. That's also why I started with it and why I still do it. It's about revealing an image that couldn't be there in the first place without these cameras that I use. I think it's so interesting that if I wouldn't have that camera and I would be in the dark, I wouldn't see anything. Then you have the camera and then you do see something but, it also affects your own mood while filming. When you are in the dark and you really need to look at your tiny screen to see anything, you're really filming like this, if I look up the spot is bright for the camera but not for me. So I'm still sitting in the dark. So it's a very different experience from when you're filming with the lights on or without the night vision.

S: Yes then you can just leave the camera there.

M: Yes, and you feel like you are in a really small space when you're filming with night vision, because you're really sitting up close.

S: Does it have, because I have never seen a night vision camera, does it have a special light attached to it?

M: It's at the lens, a spot, a tiny light near the lens.

S: Oh okay.

M: It's really nice because you can also put your finger in front of the light and then you can make blurs and make it a bit darker. Also when you point it at a mirror, which is also why I like using it, the light bounces back. Just when you have these mirrors and you put a light in front of it, then the light also reflects back. It's the same when you use a night vision camera in front of the mirror, so the

light bounces in the image and it records it which is also very interesting.

S: Okay.

J: So it still needs a bit of light?

M: Yes.

S: But it's not enough light if you just set up then a camera and hit record and then you move away from it. Your eyes cannot see just by using the light of the camera.

M: No it's too small.

S: It's not enough, ah okay.

M: No at least not for my eyes.

S: I'm sure they're like everyone else's eyes.

M: No, yes I think I have average eyes. No I don't see that much then and I think that the spot which night vision uses, it has phosphor in it, so that's what gives the green/blue hue, but yeah it's really, it's my favourite camera.

S: The light comes with the camera, it's not a lens?

M: No it comes with the camera.

S: And you cannot use that camera with normal light?

M: No you can, it has a switch with night vision on it. It's from Sony a handheld camera, they usually have the night vision attached to it. But I think they were one of the first who brought out a night vision camera, but then they were put off the market. Because they could look through people's clothes. So you could see people naked and then they pulled it out.

S: Through people's clothes? Wow.

M: Yeah, It's really, I think that happened like in the eighties, beginning of nineties. I think it happened then not sure.

S: Weird.

M: Really weird.

S: like an x-ray.

M: It was a bit of an accident. X-ray that's what it was. I think that now, the night vision cameras, like the really old ones they also didn't use a really bright spot. Now they do so the light bounces back and thus you cannot look through people's clothes. Because otherwise that would be possible. So I think if you want you can still alter your camera and make it, I would never do that haha. But yeah, I think it must be possible.

S: I can imagine you go just opening your camera and take pieces out, that's brave.

J: And I can really see the connection, as you were speaking about the construction of a camera and how this lens works. I feel it comes from your early research of the physical camera and different lenses and the parts and the chemistry.

M: Yeah, I've read so much about it my entire wiki page is full with technical information about infrared cameras, night vision, thermal imaging. At first I thought that I wanted to use them because they were used a lot in wars. Then later I discovered, not necessarily that was what I was interested in. I think it's not an interest in violence, it's more of an interest with being looked at and being uncomfortable and the entire spectrum of the ethics of looking at someone. Because I wrote also in a motivation letter that I always wondered when looking turns into gazing, because gazing feels really unfriendly to me.

S: Gazing is like staring.

M: Yeah, it's like staring and it's really, it feels weird.

S: It's a little bit more intruding.

M: Yes intruding, it feels like an invasion or an intrusion. I think that's what gazing means for me and then the funny thing is that in my own work I make use of that. Because I am actually a bit scared of it. When I showed my images to Ine she said: Ah that looks a bit scary. So I thought yes I feel that too.

S: Okay, and what did David say about this whole thing?

M: Well he always points out the power structure. He always asks me what do you see, so you see the power structure? The this time I saw it different then him and he said look again, what do you see now and then I saw again a different power structure. Because especially in the footage when I filmed my friend, I told him no there is no power

structure, we were talking and she could see me through the mirrors. He said yes but without that knowledge looking at the image what do you see then? Then I thought wow, it's happening again, because she's sitting with her back towards me and she sees her reflection in the mirror and I'm behind her with my camera. She cannot turn around, when she talks to me she's really talking to her own reflection and she just hears my voice. Because for the pose she was looking at herself.

S: That does sound scary yeah.

M: It is scary because there is a person behind her and she is sitting there. Even though in reality she knows it is me, but if you wouldn't know then that would be a completely different shot. Because if the footage you hear was talking about déjà vu and how she had one and blablabla just like, a friend conversation. So then David pointed out to me what if the conversation would be about something completely different, with you just asking her questions. Then how would the viewer feel when

they see this? Then I thought oh shit, that would be a completely different story.

S: Also if I don't think about just this scene, but in the context of a finished film that is shown to an audience that doesn't know that you are her friend. They are just seeing this scene, and looking at this actually very small and cute girl at night, and like she cannot see this person that is filming her, that is looking at her, so it's a bit yeah.

M: Yeah exactly. I look very different so I don't look what I look like in real life. My face is blurred so you don't really know who is talking to her. That's unclear. The scary thing is that, because there comes light of the camera that bounces from below, it gives this really creepy look.

J: Those are really scary shots. The lighting source from below.

M: Right so the shadows they are like this, so that makes it even more threatening. Because for me and I know that's my friend, that's me in the shot.

Susanna: So yeah, not threatening in a way for you.

M: And then you look again, and it's creepy.



S: Cool.

J: Yeah I think it's really interesting, to show this work to people who don't know anything or very little of basically your decisions. Because if I did not know you were working with infrared or night vision already, and I see these works for the first time, I would think these are really deliberate choices to me.

So they come with a lot of associations. So when I see night vision and I haven't seen this latest footage, but if I see it I think chances are without this knowledge I would think this scares me. A lot of uncertainty in this kind of darkness, like not knowing, that taps into this feeling.

M: Yeah, exactly and I wanted to, I want to, with all of this to make a psychological horror film. So with these themes, or maybe a thriller because with horror I'm just reading into the genre, so I'm not sure yet if something really big and gory is supposed to happen. I don't think so because I saw films that don't have that.

S: I wouldn't think too much about which genre you want to make.

M: Well,

S: Just make what you want to make and then someone will eventually stick a label on it.

M: Yeah, Barend he told me that, because he knows all about genre, he said just read into both and then try to make choices deliberately and think about which genre you would like to be in. Because then it will be much easier to promote your own film and knowing which audience it will speak to. So, but, there has been written a lot about psychological thriller versus psychological horror. Even the experts are not always really sure.

S: I'm just thinking, of course they have a lot of characteristics, there are pages and pages and books and books written about genre. But I think the main sort of difference is that in horror there is something irrational like supernatural, there is a non-realistic event or element. While thriller is more like, it is scary and there is tension but there isn't some sort of transcendental thing happening.

M: No exactly, it's realistic.

S: No it's not realistic but it's like there's no supernatural element, everything that happens is

part of this world, or at least the world they established there. It can even take place in space, that's fine, it's not a ghost, it's not a zombie.

M: No exactly.

S: It's your husband..Let's face it.

J: Hahaha

M: Yes it's just your husband, he was wrong all along. He's the bad guy.

S: Usually it's the maid

M: But it's always them

S: It's always them so let's just say it's always the husband.

M: That's also why you guys should both really see: It Follows. Jue did you not like horror or scary?

J: Normally even the most mild horror film stays with me for too long.

M: I get that though, there is one horror film: It Follows, and there is this horror entity that takes up the form of human beings. What happens is that when it wants to hurt someone, it just walks to them in a straight line, it cannot run, it's just like walking which makes it more threatening actually. Because whenever do you walk into a straight line at the same pace, up to someone without any emotion. But, with anyone you see walking in the film, you're wondering is that this entity? Is it going to kill someone? So you become afraid of everyone in the film and that's really good I feel. It's really.. Yeah you should both see it. I'm trying not to spoil the film too much. Trying to explain this without giving away the story.

J: Is there any gore image in the film?



M: Yes sometimes, but

S: For some reason I thought to, I don't have too much problems with the gore stuff, like if someone gets chopped up, of course it's disgusting and I'm looking at it like AaaAaaah but, it's more the tension that stays with me a lot. Like I watched a trailer the other day you know from those adverts that pop-up on Instagram and Facebook. The trailer of this new Horror film comes up called: Ma, I think. Fuck like..

J: Yeah I couldn't watch it

S: I kept thinking about it

J: I had to stop it

S: And when it pops up again I'm like no, no scroll, scroll, scroll I don't want to watch it again and it's just the trailer. You don't see anything gore there's no blood in the trailer it's just her with the crazy eyes. This sort of house in the darkness like..

M: It's called Ma?

J: Yes, is it from the same line as Us and Get Out?

S: Oh maybe

J: I feel it has some kind of connection

S: Remember yeah bits of credits that were showing in the trailer, Get Out was mentioned but it's not the same director. Maybe it's the same producer or the same writer.

J: Kino actually, this is a lot of off-topic but we can decide later. Kino actually had this series of screenings that focuses on Black Horror. Have you seen it?

M: I wanted to see it, but then that evening I had something. But, I really wanted to see Us. Have you seen it?

J: I haven't, because the poster was too scary, and I did see the trailer once, it was already very scary, and then the poster because I was still working in the bakery. So I had to like park my bike nearby Kino and once I parked my bike in front of the poster, and like later it was still getting dark around 6 or 7 and I had to look away when I unlocked my bike, this is the kind of affect the image will have on me.

S: Which one is Us?

M: With the family

J: Like a duplicated family almost, like an evil version.

M: I think it's really scary, it's worse than Get Out, a bit more, because Get Out is also funny. I think,

S: I really like Get Out, I think it's very funny.

M: I think you will like that one actually, there is no gore stuff

J: Yes, but there is crazy eyes, I cannot deal with crazy eyes.

S: Crazy eyes are bad right? What's with crazy eyes?

M: Empty eyes like



J: Empty eyes or

S: When people roll them



J: speaking of crazy eyes, I recently, I have some stories that has nothing to do with OITNB because that one is really cute.

S: That's a character Susan.

M: Susanna! Oh no Susan

S: Good actress

M: Really good

J: So I revisited an anime that I watched in my childhood that was just randomly, like roommates were talking, or discussing childhood cartoons

actually. So back when I was growing up, I watched these Japanese anime series which is still going, it's like a really long running series, it never ends until probably the author dies I guess. So it's about this High School detective who is like a genius in solving murders and what not.

S: Konan

J: Yeah

M: I haven't seen it yet

S: In Italy it had a very cool tune: Konan supah Detective

J: Probably a dub of the Japanese theme song, but back then, so I recently revisited it when I was back in China I also watched some newer episodes, basically when I stopped watching it, it came out with 500 more episodes. So from what I read on the internet the first 100 episodes, which is what I saw as a young person were the scariest. So I remember

searching what were the scariest episodes, and one of the search results was this specific episode and it haunted me for so long. It was like a gore murder, and it's the only case where they murder and dismember a victim.

S: But that was supposed to be for children

J: Exactly

S: What the fuck

M: That's really messed up

J: So this was in the top 3 scariest moments of Konan. Whenever I revisit it, even if I just see the screenshot of a scene of like this dismembered head. Because the crazy part of the story was, because it's a mystery so you have to solve who's the killer. It's the classic setting 6 or 7 people are trapped in this mansion, in the mountains and the only bridge is cut off and there is this guy, a really scary looking mummy with the empty eyes. The empty mummy

was sort of the suspect, so the whole episode just had a lot of imageries of the scary mummy with the crazy eyes. And then one image in particular that haunts me to this day was like when the mummy swings down from the roof carrying the person who was murdered. But later it turned out, I'm going to spoil it because,

S: Yeah, I'm not going to watch it.

M: I'm going to watch it.

J: So in the episode it happened that the mummy other than attacking, the mummy was attacking people like seemingly randomly, it seems like the mummy was trying to get at people in this mansion. The friends were having a reunion and somehow he really focused on like one woman or no two women and one woman is sort of Konan's girlfriend. Or previous girlfriend because now he's a child. Well that's not important

M: Hahaha

S: Hahaha

J: So basically everybody was thinking, the mummy was the murderer and then once they saw the mummy carrying the dead person like from the roof and disappear into the darkness everybody ran out to search for that person. They didn't know she was dead or not, so people ran onto the roof with flash lights and then all of a sudden one person is like o here is a hand, o here is an arm, here is a leg and then someone is like I found a head. And then you just hear this thump, you don't see the head, or something like

S: The head falling on the ground

M: FOR CHILDREN

J: Maybe you should see this because it's crazy

M: I should

J: Now that you also know the ending maybe it's slightly better, too stomach

S: How did they give this too children, too watch?

M: Yeah I wonder

J: But in the end, so basically the murderer, how he committed the murder, of course it's one of the guys in the mansion. Originally when he appeared you see his belly he's like a fat guy.

S: O god

J: The reason, can you already imagine? He created this belly for this whole thing, so basically he attacks and manages to kill the woman he meant to kill and he dismembered her. Too create this illusion, the other parts of the body was already in the woods. But to create this illusion that he was not a killer, he created a very elaborate mechanism with a mummy puppet. So previously when people see the mummy walking that's him dressed as the mummy but when

everyone including him see the mummy from the roof carrying that person, it was him using the mummy plus the head. Just the head and nothing else to create a scene, like it's a different person who took the person away. After that scene ended in his mechanism he knew where that mummy would end up with the head. He put the head back in his belly and ran with everybody else to the woods and then put the head out. And pretended that, because in the film you only hear the thump and then later, when the detective was solving the case, he is like that thump is that. It was the head dropping. The evidence that revealed this whole plan. He only wanted to kill that woman for one specific reason, but he started attacking the girlfriend because she walked in his room when she saw his stomach, which was thin. She did not notice and he thought she knew, that's why he kept attacking her. So that was a whole episode.

To this day it has been like 20, 15 years, I still, If you show that image to me I cannot sleep at night.

M: Oh man

J: The mummy carrying the head

M: It's so freaky, it's really bad

S: Freaky and it's targeted to kids, what's wrong with people?

J: But I guess I mention this because of these eyes, so the mummy had those eyes, and of course the head had those eyes.



(Due to Jue's childhood memories I could not upload an image of the dismembered head)

S: No like crazy eyes are definitely, I don't know I think what I find scary usually, of course like I'm scared with any horror film, because you are meant to be scared and being scared is fine. I get this kind of feeling, that sensation of being frightened about something that I don't quite know. What it is and where it is you know something. I get it more when in Horror films it's an actual person, that is just a bad person. Like you know in True Detective, have you watched True Detective?

M: Not yet.

S: Dude..

M: Is it really scary?

J: *laughs* Okay maybe I should not watch it.

S: Maybe go with the first episode and then see how you feel about it. If you can handle the first episode which is okay, but be aware that it gets.. Should I spoil it or not?

M: Spoil a bit.

J: Spoil a bit!

S: Not the whole thing, just a bit. These two detectives, somewhere in the South upstate, somewhere where it is very humid, I don't know.

M: Texas?

S: Louisiana, yes it's in Louisiana and they just find the body of a young girl and then this sort of leads them to other murders, that happened also in the past. They just sort of find out that there is a cult established by this family of very powerful men. You know like landowners, and these guys were kidnapping mainly young women and children and

they would keep them in a shed. I'm going to leave it at shed.

M: I hate that, I always hate that.

S: So that and at some points there are some elements that are slightly supernatural, because they were a cult. There is this sort of dark, magic thing happening, but really in the end it's this bunch of horrible white men just thinking that you get more powerful if you rape children.

M: Uuuugh I cannot watch it..

S: It's a very well made show, there are other seasons that I have not watched. Because, like

M: Yeah, it's just too much

S: it's a very well made season, in terms of writing, the photography and all that, but it's.. that kind of thing I find extremely hard to watch and then to

forget. It's too much because that's, I guess it's a real evil,

M: A real element



S: That you actually can encounter in the world more than you know, more than a ghost. It's much more likely that kind of thing so it's just like, fuck it's too much. And the photography plays a big role because obviously this whole topic is very morbid, right? It's very grotesque and morbid and creepy and the photography has this like, and the place so it's very, the vegetation and you can see that the air is very humid and all that. It doesn't give you the

feeling of warmth it gives it a feeling of sweaty, cold really not welcoming place. It's very, very well made. But my point was that, that kind of thing when I watch it, it kind of haunts me I guess. A little bit, it really stays with me and then I think about it, and it's just sickening. It's very..

M: Yeah..

J: *Sighs* Yeah this reminds me of, so I listened to this music, by Sufjan Stevens

M: Yeah, yeah

J: And I guess he's made many, a lot of music, one of his earlier albums is almost biographical,

S: Is he the father or the son?

J: Sufjan Stevens? I don't know, I thought..

S: Is he the old dude that became Muslim?

M & J: Nooo

J: He's a young person

S: And it's not his son?

M: I don't know haha

J: I actually never read that Wikipedia page, so I don't know who he is, but anyways he has this really slow mellow music and he has this really clear voice. I've listened to his other albums, but this one album, it's just on the YouTube playlist. I've listened to it, it's a beautiful song it's called: John Wayne the second. John Wayne junior or something, but the way I listen to a song, I don't always listen to the lyrics.

M: *laughs*

J: So the lyrics that end up in my ear, and I remember they are like poetic in a way, so like: "With cloth over their mouth.."

M: Wasn't that John Wayne Gacy?!!

J: John Wayne Gacy!

M: *Laughs*

J: Yes, I remember the name it's John Wayne Gacy.

S: What?

M & J: John Wayne Gacy!

J: The name, that's the name of the song and the name of the real person and I listened to this song, like this is beautiful. The fragments of lyrics doesn't have any meanings attached to them they're just interesting. Because I like that song so much I wikipedia'd it, I typed in John Wayne Gacy and it turned out he's a mass-murderer.

S: Aaaaah...

J: He's like a serial-killer and uh..

M: Also of really young people right?

J: What he did was, I read the whole wiki page. So I will finish the point first, I bring him up because it's a true story, happened in the 70s in Chicago and I read the whole wiki page and I couldn't sleep for two whole days.

S: Oh wow..

J: His story was he would, he was a married man and then he worked at a construction company, so he had access to concrete and what not

S: Oh god

J: So at some point he started luring young boys who were interning at his construction company to his home, and it has a specific address in Chicago actually. *chuckle* I was so obsessed that I really looked into even that property which has since been bought.

M: Oh..

J: But..

M: *laughs*

S: Sold it really cheap..

J: He basically lured those boys and then he raped them or it's unclear what exactly he did to them.

S: Something sexual was non-consensual?

J: Yes non-consensual, a lot of them when the bodies were found, they would find strangle marks and what not.

S: Fuuuck..

J: So basically he would rape them and kill them and then he buries them in his yard or floorboards and

poor concrete on top of them. And when they found it, Wikipedia is very specific

M: They are very factual but that makes it also really scary because they list every single..

J: They said at the time they found the last body which is the 27th body, they saw that was the last one. Because at 25th they thought they had found everything but then they found some more. After reading that, how could you, imagine being that person and living with all of these dead bodies that you have buried and like cemented in your floorboards.

M: And having no guilt like whatsoever.

J: No and keep doing it more and I think he was reported at some point because the neighbour heard something. That's what I remember but I, I don't really

S: Yeah I'm not going to look into that *chuckles*

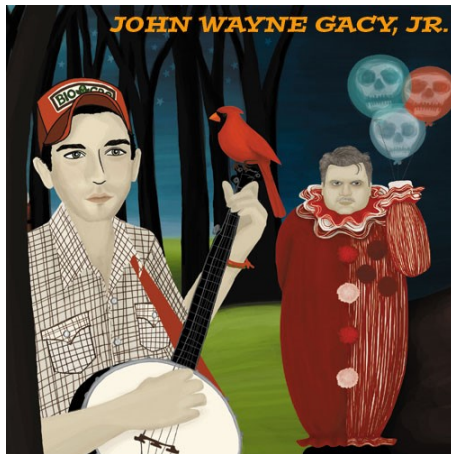
J: Don't, yeah it's going back to this is real

S: Yeah that's what makes these films, these stories it's just because these are very similar stories what you read on newspapers, you know, or Wikipedia pages. So, that's what makes them really scary. Because it really makes you doubt the human beings you are surrounded by, you know.

M: Hmm but that is also what that film It Follows is about where the person who can hurt you looks like another person and I read also in this review from someone else: How are we actually able to have all of this trust in another human being, to walk outside and not worry at all. That's actually pretty special of course, if you think about it because there is an amount of trust that you have when you go outside of your home, and go to places and meet new people.

J: That's definitely one of the reasons I was so scared by the Gacy song afterwards when I hear the song, I couldn't unhear it

S: No you know what he refers to yeah



J: So, in writing the lyrics he really captured him very well because the neighbours always thought he was a nice guy. It's kind of the typical serial killer story because serial killers are always nice guys, like on the outside or to the people who live around them. They are always like oh, he's just an average joe you know. So yeah, this kind of doubt anybody can be evil basically.

Yeah no, that's definitely like yeah, I mean I think you hear these kind of stories from all over the world, right? Like either single human beings being completely mad and evil or group psych cults and stuff. I think Europe, probably the whole world is like this. Yeah it's uh daaah..

J: But then that brings something refreshing about Kimmy Schmidt, because when you think about the premise of Kimmy Schmidt, it's really

M: It's very interesting!

S: It has such a dark plot

M: So dark

J: In the beginning I did not get the vibe that they were raped or anything and then it became evident in a story. But it's not like what they focus on because Kimmy goes about her life

S: She's a survivor

J: Yeah she's a survivor and because I liked that show more and more now, because when you actually consider the setting you're like wow this is amazing. And then how they wrote the characters not just Kimmy but her,

M: Titus and

J: Her other yeah

S: The other girls

J: The other girls that were in the bunker, I mean also Titus and Lily everybody is a dysfunctional human being. They're all, it reveal their humanness, like the other survivors.

S: I remember this, I didn't watch the whole show, just a few episodes and I got to a point when one of those girls visit her and she's about to get married with a guy that I think.. Kimmy realizes he's gay. But she's like yeah of course I know, but you know but he's very kind to me, we're really happy, you

know it's good companionship. We're happy he likes me but whatevs. There was a story like that.

J: There's also one episode where, one of the survivors started her own cult, because a cult is the only thing she knows how to do. So she started her own cult capturing teenage boys, but it's very clear in the scene there's no sexual thing involved.

S: She kidnaps them?

J: Kind of, she lures teenage boys and then she was about to bomb the whole place and then the FBI surrounds her whole house and they ask Kimmy to talk to her. To talk some sense out of her and this whole episode is about,

S: How to start a cult?

J: It's like I can do this, this kind of thing and in the end it's, maybe we should watch that one actually

M: It's really good, you also have this one episode where there is a party, and it was Kimmy her first party. Then there is this song and it's a rap song and it goes like: "Hitting a bitch with a baseball bat" that's like the chorus of the song. Then Kimmy looks really surprised like huh? Because she has been in this bunker for all these years and then Titus just says like "Yeah I'm not responsible for humanity" or something like that. Whatever like I can't help it, this is music now.

J: *Laughs*

M: But it is true, especially in rap songs

S: *Chuckles* They're pretty violent, hitting someone with a baseball bat

M: But there's a lot worse in rap

J: Oh yeah, the stereotype in rap is like bitches and money



S: Yeah but to hit with a baseball bat!!

M: That's true

J: I never thought of that physical violence

S: I mean the language kind of bothers me but whatever, it's more like the tune then what they say

M: I had this research in my graduation year of my Illustration bachelors and we had to do our own

readings. So what I picked was to read a shitload of rap songs, I read so many of them, all of them violent against women. Or other people and they were all very successful famous artists, and even the more violent the better people liked the song.

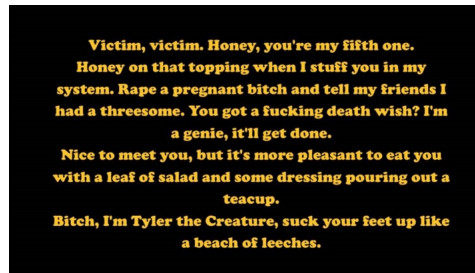
J: I'm guilty

M: Me too *laughs*

J: Not that I listen to so much but, I went through a period where I would listen to fuckin by A\$ap Rocky, because it has such a good beat. Then I'm like it's unhealthy because I've listened for ten hours to this song, I need to know what he's saying. Then I looked into the lyrics, it's basically about how he's addicted to sex and that he wants to fuck people.

M: I still know many of the lyrics that I read there was like this line from Earl Sweatshirt, when he was still pretty young I think he was 16 when he wrote this. It was something like "Her body is a temple, I don't give a fuck I'm atheist". I kind of laughed

about it, like wtf but the rest of the song was way more violent. Then that line, but I already thought like what do you mean? It's pretty tough.



Victim, victim. Honey, you're my fifth one.
Honey on that topping when I stuff you in my
system. Rape a pregnant bitch and tell my friends I
had a threesome. You got a fucking death wish? I'm
a genie, it'll get done.
Nice to meet you, but it's more pleasant to eat you
with a leaf of salad and some dressing pouring out a
teacup.
Bitch, I'm Tyler the Creature, suck your feet up like
a beach of leeches.

J: On that note shall we get dessert? Stop button
yeah

Addition Susanna

S: I do feel I have a.. responsibility, mainstream media have the responsibility, should have actually. Should have the responsibility to give you, to represent you in a fair way. Because we all watch these things and if you are never represented in that, or if you're represented badly, in the wrong way or

in a non-complete way, then you are reduced to a stereotype. And I think we tend, especially at a young age to sort of reproduce those stereotypes. You know, with ourselves: "I should be like that" but also we judge others, when they are not like that. Then of course we become adults and we hopefully become a bit more educated than that. But not everyone has access to that to education and like stuff. That was my point! Now pee and dessert.

J: I started recording the second bit of yours because it was so good. But maybe it'll just serve as like a..

SUSANNA'S APARTMENT

FRITTATA WITH
SPINACH, MUSHROOMS AND COURGETTES

HOMEMADE CRISPY BREAD

DIPS

CHEESE

ROASTED NEW POTATOES WITH MUSTARD

HOMEMADE BANANA AND CACAO SORBET

WINE